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TELEGLOBAL

Exceptional service, without exception.

TeleGlobal Consulting Group – providing an exceptional level of Managed Services to SMBs in the Professional and Financial Services Sectors



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CEOCFO: *Mr. Poptsis, what is the overall vision behind TeleGlobal Consulting Group?*

Mr. Poptsis: The overall vision that we have at TeleGlobal is to provide an exceptional level of managed services which are uniquely designed to meet the needs of small and medium sized businesses, mostly in the professional and financial services sectors. My background is in corporate finance, and I have leveraged my understanding of the professional services sector to be able help guide our team in developing a set of managed IT services which specifically meet the needs of firms in this space. With the rapidly changing pace of technology these days, the complexity of IT infrastructure, even in small firms has become quite complex. Add to this an ever-increasing threat from malicious actors which have brought cybersecurity issues to the forefront of every business's daily concerns. At TeleGlobal, we recognize the importance of having robust cybersecurity, and we have strategically decided to partner with industry leading firms in the cybersecurity industry to be able to help tailor solutions that address the specific needs of our clients. The result has been that we have been able to offer our clients a complete end to end managed IT services solution that provides our clients with an exceptional level of service, while at the same time, leveraging the innovation of our industry leading partners. This allows our clients to focus on their business knowing that TeleGlobal can effectively plan, implement, and manage their technology infrastructure.

Having come from a financial background and having been in a similar firm, I realized there were distinctive challenges within small and medium-sized businesses being able to generate a level of expertise in-house able to effectively deal with complex IT issues. Therefore, it was just a natural evolution for us to develop a series of products and services that allow these organizations to not have to worry about their IT infrastructure needs.

CEOCFO: *Are people ready or perhaps even more than ready today?*

Mr. Poptsis: I have seen a distinct shift over the past decade on the part of professionals in terms of being comfortable in making the decision to let outside firms oversee aspects of their IT technology and processes. More recently, we have seen a rapid increase in the number of cybersecurity attacks targeting firms in the professional services and financial sectors. The COVID 19 pandemic and resulting shift to work from home (WFH) business models, have further increased the vulnerability of firms as the quick shift to having employees work from their homes has meant that in many cases, work being performed from a home network which did not have many of the layers of cyber security that had been put in place to protect the office network. We are seeing that many firms in the sectors that we support have come to the realization that it is very difficult to develop the level of in-house expertise required to effectively deal with these rapidly

evolving and extremely complex cybersecurity threats. This shift in mindset amongst professional services firms has been the catalyst that has allowed us to have more meaningful discussions with prospective clients around how we can assist their organizations in implementing a robust IT framework that can reduce the risks of cyber-attacks, while at the same time, make them more effective and efficient within their business processes. Small and medium sized firms are starting to accept the fact that they cannot manage their IT infrastructure themselves and that they need to seek input from managed service providers like TeleGlobal.

CEOCFO: *What is the key to TeleGlobal to being not only up-to-date with what is going on in terms of solutions and problems but being ahead of the game?*

Mr. Poptsis: We quickly realized that the pace and scale of changes in the IT landscape had reached a point where it was not possible for a single firm such as ourselves to effectively stay up-to-date and even ahead of the curve. Consequently, we undertook a deliberate strategy to partner with leading-edge technology companies in the cybersecurity space and to incorporate their technologies within the scope of services which we offer our clients. Secondly, we worked closely with our technology partners to be able to gain their trust to the point where we were able to join their advisory boards. Having a presence on our partners' advisory boards has allowed us to be able help our partners' R&D processes, and to ensure that they are able to incorporate certain features that our clients require into subsequent versions of their products and services. We at TeleGlobal have partnered extensively with industry leading firms in Canada, US, and Europe to be able to build a community of knowledge that we can draw upon when putting together solutions for our clients. This has allowed TeleGlobal to continue to be at the forefront of our industry in terms of both the expertise of our team, as well as, having the ability to leverage the in-depth expertise of our partners when needed.

"The notion that people can rise to a challenge has clearly been evident at TeleGlobal over the past two years. I am confident that having been able to successfully help our clients navigate through all the challenges presented by the effects of the pandemic, while being able to continue to grow our business in the double digits throughout the COVID19 pandemic, has shown me that there is very little that our team is not able to accomplish." John Poptsis

We have realized that our strength comes from our ability to build a network of strong partners and to work closely with them to be able to develop solutions that allow our clients to benefit, not only from our own expertise, but from the expertise of all the industry leading partners that we work with. This is one of the critical success factors which has proven to be instrumental in allowing us to advance our cybersecurity business to the point where we feel comfortable that we are becoming one of the firms at the leading edger our industry. Success for us these days is in part dependent as much on the capabilities of our partners, as it is on the expertise that we are able to develop amongst our team members.

We are not only involved in the procurement of services from these vendors, but we are also heavily involved in their research and development and in giving feedback to these organizations on how to improve their services to better fit the needs of our customers.

CEOCFO: *Would you tell us something specific that you might have learned or were able to embrace through the collaboration?*

Mr. Poptsis: As we began the process of building out our partnerships with firms in the US, our discussions with these partners at the advisory board level really made us aware early on of the scope, complexity, and overall scale of cybersecurity attacks which many small and medium sized firms were experiencing within the US. This was a few years ago, when there were only a handful of large cyber-attacks affecting companies in Canada and there was not a general appreciation within the Canadian marketplace that the risk of cyber-attacks could become as widespread and complex as it has today. The work which we were involved in with our partners' advisory boards was able to give us a very early warning into just how pervasive the threat of cyber-attacks would become in small and medium sized firms within Canada. This early insight allowed us at TeleGlobal to understand the rapid changes that were coming and as a result, we were able to implement a robust multi-layer cyber security strategy within our clients well ahead of many of our industry peers. Many of our clients did not fully appreciate just how rapidly the risk of cyber-attacks would affect their businesses but given the longstanding relationships which we had with our clients, and the trust they placed in us, we were able to implement the necessary measures to safeguard their systems early.

Looking back, I am not sure that we would have been as successful in helping our clients had we not had the early insight into what was happening in the cybersecurity space from our partners outside of Canada.

CEOCFO: *How do you reach out and how do you explain to a prospective client why they should be using TeleGlobal?*

Mr. Poptsis: Our approach to reaching out and acquiring new business has leveraged my financial background as a CPA, as well as the expertise that we have gained from working with some of our very first clients in the professional and financial services sectors. As a former CFO and CRO, I have a strong appreciation for the way in which our clients evaluate our services, as I have been in their position before in evaluating IT outsourcing options. Many of our team at TeleGlobal have backgrounds that span beyond simply IT and include functional expertise in areas such as accounting, engineering, and business management. This multidisciplinary expertise allows our prospective clients to understand the value we can offer in terms of providing managed IT services which really address their specific needs and financial constraints. Our approach to working with prospective clients is not your typical IT driven sales process. We leverage the unique expertise of our team to be able to present IT solutions to our clients in such a way that really speaks to the key business issues of the prospective client in language and terminology that they can relate to within the context of their own business. As a CPA who had evaluated many IT proposals, I work closely with our team to make sure that our proposals are not written with an emphasis on IT terminology and are more focused on addressing specific business issues within the client. A detailed financial analysis that can clearly demonstrate the relationship between what we are proposing and increases in their business value is a key component of all our proposals.

A lot of our business has been acquired through referrals from existing clients. Once a referral has reached out to us, there is a certain amount of implied trust that comes from having one of our existing clients vouch for our abilities and track record. The professional and financial services sectors are a very close-knit industry, and it is not uncommon for us to meet potential clients through the referral process which we may have known from previous roles outside of our firm. We have leveraged our relationships over the years to build up our core business.

We have now reached a point in our company's growth where we have established a certain degree of reputation amongst the industry and our peers in terms of our core philosophy, expertise, approach, and our consistent track-record of success. We have recently expanded our growth strategy to include increasing our exposure and profile with prospective clients that we may not have any prior relationship. In much the same way as we have used partnerships with leading-edge technology firms to expand our capabilities within the cybersecurity space, we are working to develop similar partnerships with firms that can help us market our services to companies within their partner networks. The next 12 to 18 months will see our team focus on identifying potential marketing partners and building out those relationships to the point where we can begin to effectively market our services to companies within their networks.

CEOCFO: *Why is now the time and how are you ready?*

Mr. Poptsis: I think a couple of factors have made this the opportune time to start approaching a much broader sector of our market. We have gotten to a point where we feel very confident with the capabilities of our team, as well as the systems and processes which we have implemented. The COVID19 pandemic provided our firm with a really good way to test the resiliency and robustness of our services and capabilities and showed me just how strong a team we have in place. We have always informally adopted the motto of doing "whatever it takes" to overcome adversity in the pursuit of achieving our objectives. The pandemic simply highlighted to me the degree to which we have built a remarkable team and has allowed our employees to really shine in the face of a once in a century, global pandemic.

The notion that people can rise to a challenge has clearly been evident at TeleGlobal over the past two years. I am confident that having been able to successfully help our clients navigate through all the challenges presented by the effects of the pandemic, while being able to continue to grow our business in the double digits throughout the COVID19 pandemic, has shown me that there is very little that our team is not able to accomplish.

As an accountant, I am always quite conservative, so risk mitigation is always important to me, so I am always a little hesitant to undertake strategies to grow our business too quickly. I believe that based on what I have seen our team accomplish over the last two years, I am very comfortable with accelerating our efforts to expand our business.

We have put a lot of effort into developing the expertise of our team. We have specifically hired people with very diverse backgrounds so that we can increase our skillset and understanding as a company. As a result, our team has done an excellent job of creating a platform for our business which will allow us to scale our operations not only domestically, but also internationally. In the past few years, we have seen a sizeable amount of growth in our business in the US. It first started when our Canadian clients began to expand their operations in the US, and we are now starting to market our services directly to US based customers which I believe is a natural evolution of where we want to grow as a company.

CEOCFO: *What have you learned during COVID?*

Mr. Poptsis: The COVID19 pandemic reaffirmed a virtue that I have held for most of my professional career that being flexible and resilient and able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances, efficiently, and competently is a key factor in the long-term success both of individuals and of organizations.

What we learned as an organization early in the COVID19 pandemic was that our ability to adapt and react quickly to changes facing our clients' businesses was something which set us above and beyond many of our industry peers. We have always been very proactive in terms of addressing our clients' needs and we knew that the pandemic would have a quick and long-lasting change in the way our clients operated their businesses. Therefore, even before the pandemic caused massive lockdowns and restrictions on businesses' ability to function, we had started to work with our clients around developing contingency plans if one day something would affect their ability to operate their businesses from their primary office locations. This was simply part of the Business Continuity Plans that we create for our clients. The only difference with the pandemic was the duration in which our clients would need to sustain their operations in a disaster recovery mode.

Looking back, it was a very hectic and stressful couple of weeks, but I think that our clients quickly realized that we were very flexible and able to adapt quickly to changes in their businesses resulting from the COVID19 pandemic.

As a result, our clients were able to transition from their in-office premises operations to work from home almost seamlessly without any issue. If anything, that further strengthened our clients' trust in our abilities and I am a firm believer that if you want to really see and test people, the best way to do that is to see how they operate and conduct themselves in extremely adverse circumstances. The fact that our team was able to rise to the occasion during an unprecedented global pandemic speaks volumes to not only their professionalism and their level of expertise, but the robustness of our team.

In the last eighteen months, I believe our clients have had an opportunity to gain a deep understanding of what our ethos is at TeleGlobal and to understand where our focus is, how we operate, and what we hold true in terms of being a valued managed services provider.

I firmly believe the COVID19 pandemic was an unprecedented global situation that may not be seen again for quite some time, so the fact that we were able to live through it and learn from this experience is something that will make us much stronger going forward in much the same way previous global challenges have shaped future generations.

